

▼ ACTION SPEAKS LOUDLY *Cap News Jan 29 A21*

Okanagan College sets down green footprint

To the editor:

Bravo to our Okanagan College.

We have all seen an increase in recycling receptacles around town, grocery stores handing out fabric bags, and repair garages providing drop-off sites for used motor oils. We have slowly become so accustomed to these green changes that we have forgotten to thank these businesses for their efforts, which undoubtedly cost them in the short term.

The other day I read an article about the new Centre of Excellence

which Okanagan College is building in Penticton. It will exceed all modern standards in conservation and environmental sustainability. Through design, built-in conservation and recycling, and solar power, this building meets the Living Building Challenge, which means it uses net zero water and net zero power.

Also, the Centre for Learning at the KLO campus here in Kelowna surpassed the Gold rating awarded by LEEDS (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) before our govern-

ment even mandated the standard as law.

Just a few days after reading the article, I ran into my neighbour's son who had just returned from his first day at electrician's trade school at Okanagan College. He told me that his campus was on a four-day work week to cut down commuter pollution by a whopping 20 per cent. By simply spending a couple extra hours on campus each day, he completes the hours he needs for the week in only four days. He saves \$20 on gas every week, puts less mileage on his car, lowers

his carbon footprint, and he saves money and gas that would normally go towards his childcare that fifth day.

If you assume 500 staff and students each use (conservatively) 10 litres of fuel each school day, their four-day week is saving 5,000 litres of gas every week. Plus, there would be 52 days per year that barely any heating or air-conditioning is used by the buildings. This is not just some short term test; this campus has been successfully working the four-day work week for several years now.

I am thrilled that today's post-secondary students have enough social conscience to notice the impact that we have on our planet, and our backyard. I applaud the college administrators that supported these new projects and especially the four-day work week. We know our environment is under siege and these bold innovations show we are finally making positive changes. Thank you Okanagan College, I am proud to call you my neighbour.

**Ian O'Callaghan,
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